the loss of vigor which the dynasty suffered after 1800 and with the foreign wars and internal rebellions which shook the Empire in the middle of the nineteenth century, this activity declined. One of its greatest exponents and patrons, Yuan Yuan, who sought to organize research, died in 1849, the year after the outbreak of the most serious of these uprisings, that of the T'ai P'ings. The *Han Hsiieh* was not forgotten, however, and contributed to the intellectual revolution which came in the last years of the nineteenth and in the twentieth century.

The *Han Hsiieh* is significant not only for its combination of originality with reverence for the past, but for the evidence which it affords of the decline of Buddhism as an effective force in the intellectual life of the Empire. In the T'ang and the centuries immediately preceding the T'ang, most of the creative thought of China was absorbed in interpreting and developing Buddhist philosophy. Under the Sung, Buddhism, while producing few thinkers of any consequence, was still strong enough to mold Confucianism. Even under the Ming, Wang Yang-ming seems to show the effect of Buddhist environment. Now, under the Ch'ing, the *Han Hsiieh* was attempting to purge Confucianism of the Buddhist and Taoist elements which the Sung thinkers had brought into it. From one point of view, the *Han Hsiieh* was evidence of a further recession of the tide of Buddhism and the reemergence above its waters of pre-Buddhist Confucianism.

Buddhism was still powerful. Tens of thousands of monks and nuns were in its cloisters and it remained one of the most prominent factors in the folklore, the art, the customs, and the religious life of the Empire. Under Ch'ien Lung there was an at-

tempt to reconcile Buddhism and Confucianism. Tibetan Buddhism was fairly prominent, through the Ch'ing rule of that land and the desire to keep the friendship of the Dalai Lama. On the whole, however, Buddhism was decaying.

There were other trends of thought, including that which kept up the tradition of Wang Yang-ming. The dominant Sung school was itself divided into at least three branches. The T'ung Ch'eng school fought the archaic and artificial literary style *(p'ien t'i)* by which sentences were composed in pairs, and strove to popularize the writings of T'ang and Sung masters and even older writers.